

NEW AMATEUR CALL-SIGN SYSTEM IN THE USSR

[Two articles in the the newspaper Sovetskiy Patriot (SP) of 6 June 1984 and one in the same publication of 27 June 1984 shed further light on the revised call-sign system introduced in the USSR effective 1 May 1984. The first two articles appeared in a monthly collection of articles called "EFIR (On-the-Air) Amateur Radio Club Issue No. 5" (EFIR-5/1984) and the third appeared in "EFIR-6/1984." These are full, though not always literal, translations, whose accuracy cannot be vouched for.]

"The Call and the Region [region]." [SP dated 6 June 1984, page 4]

[Introduction] The February issue of the "EFIR" club told about the reform in the call-signs of Soviet amateur radio stations. Naturally, it was not possible in a short article to shed light on all details of the reform. Today we offer for your attention an interview with Deputy Chief of the GIE [gosudarstvennaya inspektsiya elektrosvyazi = state telecommunications inspectorate, somewhat analogous to the U. S. Federal Communications Commission] of the USSR Ministry of Communication Lyuchiya Nikolayevna NIKITINA; the questions for the interview were drawn from the club's mail.

Q. The reform has significantly simplified the determination of the union republic based on the call. Many of our readers, however, especially beginners, are interested in how oblasts can be distinguished if any number from 1 to 0 can be used in the call-signs of any republic.

A. The principle of the administrative-territorial division of the USSR into union republics and oblasts is incorporated into the amateur radio call-sign structure. The union republic is determined by the second letter of the call-sign, and the oblast' within each republic by two symbols. In the RSFSR the number and the letter following it in the call-sign serve as the oblast' indicator, and in the remaining republics the second letter of the prefix and the first letter of the suffix do this. Thus, for the Ukrainian SSR, the Belorussian SSR, and the remaining republics, the number in the call in no way affects the determination of the oblast'.

Q. How will numbers be used in amateur radio station calls in the RSFSR?

A. Each oblast' in the RSFSR is now allotted one "number-letter" indicator, and in this connection in practically all cases the indicators adopted back in 1970 will be retained. If a need arises in the future to allot an additional reserve of call-signs, then in the European part of the RSFSR the indicators for such a reserve will begin with the numbers 1 to 6, and in the Asian part will run from numbers 7 to 0. Based on a proposal of the Federation of Radio Sport of the USSR, it has been agreed that the western borders of those oblasts, ASSR's [autonomous soviet socialist republics], and AO's [autonomous oblasts or autonomous okrugs] that have been allotted indicators with the number 9 will be considered as the border between the European and Asian parts of the RSFSR. In other words, all present UA9's are in the "Asian" part of the RSFSR.

Q. So calls with the prefixes UA5, RA7, or UZ8 can now exist in the RSFSR?

A. Theoretically, yes. But the practical requirement for such call-signs will not, evidently, arise soon. As of today, only two combinations are used from this reserve: Ust'-Ordynskiy Buryatskiy AO received the indicator 8T instead of 0T, and Aginskiy Buryatskiy AO received 8V instead of 0V.

Q. In the Ukraine, UT4 and RT5 call-signs are being issued. Will UY4's be heard?

A. The use of the prefixes UT4 and RT5 arose because two cities -- Kiev and Sevastopol' -- were allotted their own reserve of calls with the indicators T-U and T-J respectively. The need to use the reserve of calls with indicators beginning with Y will hardly arise in the foreseeable future. After UY5 radiostations cease operating on the air, the prefix UY will be put into the reserve. The same can be said of the prefix UN1 in the RSFSR.

Q. In May many new prefixes -- UC1, UB4, UH9, and others appeared on the amateur bands. Couldn't you explain by what procedure the numbers will be issued in the future for calls in the various republics?

A. The numbers in the call-signs of the union republics (except the RSFSR) are used, beginning with the "traditional" number of the area. For republics in the European part of the USSR, the numbers will first go down to 1 and then increase to 9 and 0. For republics in the Asiatic part of the USSR the procedure is the reverse: First an increase to 9 and 0, and then a reduction to 1. For example, in the Ukrainian SSR the numbers in calls will be used only in the order 5 to 1, [then] 6 to 0, and in Kirgiziya 8, 9, 0, [then] 7 to 1. For each number, calls are first allocated with the initial letter U, and then with R. For example, UB5, RB5, UB4, RB4, etc.

Q. What is the procedure for using prefixes in the RSFSR?

A. In each of the oblasts of the RSFSR the number used for issuing calls remains unchanged. To increase the reserve of calls, a letter prefix is used, to be issued in the following order: UA, RA, UV, RV, UW, RW, UZ, RZ. Collective radiostations in the RSFSR will receive prefixes in the reverse order: UZ, RZ, UW, RW, and so on. This is done in order to exclude the possibility of assigning just-turned-in individual calls with the endings WA - ZZ to collective radiostations. For similar reasons, collective radiostations in the remaining union republics are allotted prefixes with numbers differing from the "traditional" ones.

Q. As is known, five-character calls, issued up to 1970, have not been changed in the course of the present reform. At the same time issuance of such calls has again been authorized. Couldn't it happen that one of the previously issued calls were issued a second time in another oblast'? For example, the call-sign UA3GO is issued in Moscow, but the indicator 3G remains with Lipetskoaya oblast'.

A. In the introduction of the new call system, steps were taken to preclude the possibility of such duplication. For this purpose groups of calls which had been issued previously in other oblasts were excluded from the reserves of certain oblasts. Thus, in Lipetskaya oblast' five-character calls will be issued only with the prefixes RA, RV, RW, UZ, and RZ, which means that a repeat issuance of the call UA3GO is precluded.

Q. What happens if the whole reserve of five-character calls is used up in some oblast'?

A. In this case six-character calls will be issued on a regular basis to 1st-category individual stations. It is also permissible to re-assign five-character calls returned to the local GIE not less than three years previously, provided, of course, that the calls correspond to the system adopted for indicating oblasts.

Q. Call-signs beginning with the letters U and R will not be replaced when amateur stations are upgraded. But could there be situations in which a call had to be replaced against the radio amateur's will?

A. The call-sign is subject to mandatory replacement when the radio amateur departs for permanent residence in another oblast' (kray, republic). Such situations can also arise in the event administrative borders of republics or oblasts are changed.

"Information Booth." [SP dated 6 June 1984, page 4]

[Introduction] At the request of readers we are providing a brief description of the system of amateur call-signs. The first letter U or R indicates that station belongs to the USSR, the second letter indicates the union republic. These letters are shown in parentheses after the name of each republic. Oblasts, krays, ASSRs, autonomous oblasts and okrugs (AO's), and also cities of republic subordination [large cities directly subordinate to union republics with no oblast' level in between - Tr.] in the RSFSR are determined by the number and the letter following it, and in the other republics by the letter to the left and right of the number in the call. The word "oblast'" in the list given below has been left out for brevity [it is re-inserted below for clarity - Tr.]. Oblasts (ASSR's, AO's) whose indicators have been newly introduced or changed are set off in bold-faced type [here, by underlining - Tr.]

RSFSR (A, V, W, Z).

1A - Leningrad city
1C - Leningradskaya oblast'
1N - Karel'skaya ASSR
1O - Arkhangel'skaya oblast'
1P - Nenetskiy AO
 [autonomous okrug]
1Q - Vologodskaya oblast'
1T - Novgorodskaya oblast'
1W - Pskovskaya oblast'
1Z - Murmanskaya oblast'
2F - Kaliningradskaya oblast'
3A - Moscow city
3D - Moskovskaya oblast'
3E - Orlovskaya oblast'
3G - Lipetskaya oblast'
3I - Kalininskaya oblast'
3L - Smolenskaya oblast'
3M - Yaroslavskaya oblast'
3N - Kostromskaya oblast'
3P - Tul'skaya oblast'
3Q - Voronezhskaya oblast'
3R - Tambovskaya oblast'
3S - Ryazanskaya oblast'
3T - Gor'kovskaya oblast'
3U - Ivanovskaya oblast'
3V - Vladimirskaya oblast'
3W - Kurskaya oblast'
3X - Kaluzhskaya oblast'
3Y - Bryanskaya oblast'
3Z - Belgorodskaya oblast'
4A - Volgogradskaya oblast'
4C - Saratovskaya oblast'
4F - Penzenskaya oblast'
4H - Kuybyshevskaya oblast'
4L - Ul'yanovskaya oblast'
4N - Kirovskaya oblast'
4P - Tatarskaya ASSR
4S - Mariyskaya ASSR
4U - Mordovskaya ASSR
4W - Udmurtskaya ASSR
4Y - Chuvashskaya ASSR

6A - Krasnodarskiy kray
6E - Karachayevo-Cherkesskaya AO
 [autonomous oblast']
6H - Stavronol'skiy kray
6I - Kalmytskaya ASSR
6J - Severo-Osetinskaya ASSR
6L - Rostovskaya oblast'
6P - Checheno-Ingushskaya ASSR
6U - Astrakhanskaya oblast'
6W - Dagestanskaya ASSR
6X - Kabardino-Balkarskaya ASSR
6Y - Adygeyskaya AO
 [autonomous oblast']
8T - Ust' Ordynskiy Buryatskiy AO
 [autonomous okrug]
8V - Aginskiy Buryatskiy AO
 [autonomous okrug]
9A - Chelyabinskaya oblast'
9C - Sverdlovskaya oblast'
9F - Permskaya oblast'
9G - Komi-Permyatskiy AO
 [autonomous okrug]
9H - Tomskaya oblast'
9J - Khanty-Mansiyskiy AO
 [autonomous okrug]
9K - Yamalo-Nenetskiy AO
 [autonomous okrug]
9L - Tyumenskaya oblast'
9M - Omskaya oblast'
9O - Novosibirskaya oblast'
9Q - Kurganskaya oblast'
9S - Orenburgskaya oblast'
9U - Kemerovskaya oblast'
9W - Bashkirskaya ASSR
9X - Komi ASSR
9Y - Altayskiy kray
9Z - Gorno-Altayskaya AO
 [autonomous oblast']

RSFSR (A, V, W, Z) (Cont'd)

0A - Krasnoyarskiy kray
0B - Taymyrskiy AO
 [autonomous okrug]
0C - Khabarovskiy kray
0D - Yevreyskaya AO
 [Jewish autonomous oblast']
0F - Sakhalinskaya oblast'
0H - Evenkiyskiy AO
 [autonomous okrug]
0I - Magadanskaya oblast'
0J - Amurskaya oblast'
0K - Chukotskiy AO
 [autonomous okrug]
0L - Primorskiy kray
0O - Buryatskaya ASSR
0Q - Yakutskaya ASSR
0S - Irkutskaya oblast'
0U - Chitinskaya oblast'
0W - Khakasskaya AO
 [autonomous oblast']
0X - Koryakskiy AO
 [autonomous okrug]
0Y - Tuvinskaya ASSR
0Z - Kamchatskaya oblast'

Ukraine (B, T)

B-A - Sumskaya oblast'
B-B - Ternopol'skaya oblast'
B-C - Cherkasskaya oblast'
B-D - Zakarpatskaya oblast'
B-E - Dnepropetrovskaya oblast'
B-F - Odesskaya oblast'
B-G - Khersonskaya oblast'
B-H - Poltavskaya oblast'
B-I - Donetskaya oblast'
B-J - Krymskaya oblast'
B-K - Rovenskaya oblast'
B-L - Khar'kovskaya oblast'
B-M - Voroshilovgradskaya oblast'
B-N - Vinnitskaya oblast'
B-P - Volynskaya oblast'
B-Q - Zaporozhskaya oblast'
B-R - Chernigovskaya oblast'
B-S - Ivano-Frankovskaya oblast'
B-T - Khmel'nitskaya oblast'
B-U - Kiyevskaya oblast'
B-V - Kirovogradskaya oblast'
B-W - L'vovskaya oblast'
B-X - Zhitomirskaya oblast'
B-Z - Nikolayevskaya oblast'
T-J - Sevastopol' city
T-U - Kiev city

Belorussia (C)

C-A - Minsk city
C-C - Minskaya oblast'
C-I - Grodnenskaya oblast'
C-L - Brestskaya oblast'
C-O - Gomel'skaya oblast'
C-S - Mogilevskaya oblast'
C-W - Vitebskaya oblast'

Azerbaijdzhan (D)

D-D - rayons of republic
 subordination
D-K - Nagorno-Karabakhskaya AO
 [autonomous oblast']
D-N - Nakhichevanskaya ASSR

Georgia (Gruziya) (F)

F-F - rayons of republic
 subordination
F-O - Yugo-Osetinskaya AO
 [autonomous oblast']
F-Q - Adzharskaya ASSR
F-V - Abkhazskaya ASSR

Armeniya (G)

G-G - rayons of republic
 subordination

Turkmeniya (H)

H-A - Ashkhabad city
H-B - Krasnovodskaya oblast'
H-E - Maryyskaya oblast'
H-H - Ashkhabadskaya oblast'
H-W - Tashauzskaya oblast'
H-Y - Chardzhoukaya oblast'

Uzbekistan (I)

I-A - Tashkent city
I-B - Tashkent'skaya oblast'
I-C - Kashkadar'inskaya oblast'
I-D - Syrdar'inskaya oblast'
I-F - Andizhanskaya oblast'
I-G - Ferganskaya oblast'
I-I - Samarkandskaya oblast'
I-L - Bukharskaya oblast'
I-O - Namanganskaya oblast'
I-Q - Navoiyskaya oblast'
I-T - Surkhandar'inskaya oblast'
I-U - Khorezmskaya oblast'
I-V - Dzhizak'skaya oblast'
I-Z - Karakalpak'skaya ASSR

"Information Booth." [SP dated 27 June 1984, page 4]

In the last issue of the "Efir" club ("Sovetskiy Patriot" for 6 June) the first part of the allocation of calls to amateur radio stations in the USSR was published; the system was put into effect on 1 May of this year. In this "Information Booth" the second and final part of this material is given.

Tadzhikistan (J)
J-J - rayons of republic
subordination
J-K - Kulyabskaya oblast'
J-R - Gorno-Badakhshanskaya AO
[autonomous oblast']
J-S - Leninabadskaya oblast'
J-X - Kurgan-Tyubinskaya oblast'

Kazakhstan (L)
L-A - Mangyshlaksкая oblast'
L-B - Tselinogradskaya oblast'
L-C - Severo-Kazakhstanskaya
oblast'
L-D - Semipalatinskaya oblast'
L-E - Kokchetavskaya oblast'
L-F - Pavlodarskaya oblast'
L-G - city of Alma-Ata
L-I - Aktyubinskaya oblast'
L-J - Vostochno-Kazakhstanskaya
oblast'
L-K - Kzyl-Ordinskaya oblast'
L-L - Kustanayskaya oblast'
L-M - Ural'skaya oblast'
L-N - Chimkentskaya oblast'
L-O - Gur'yevskaya oblast'
L-P - Karagandinskaya oblast'
L-Q - Alma-Atinskaya oblast'
L-R - Dzhezkazganskaya oblast'
L-T - Dzhambul'skaya oblast'
L-V - Taldy-Kurganskaya oblast'
L-Y - Turgayskaya oblast'

Kirgiziya (M)
M-M - rayons of republic
subordination
M-N - Oshskaya oblast'
M-P - Narynskaya oblast'
M-Q - Issyk-Kul'skaya oblast'
M-T - Talasskaya oblast'

Moldavia (Moldaviya) (O)
O-O - rayons of republic
subordination

Lithuania (Litva) (P)
P-B - rayons of republic
subordination

Latvia (Latviya) (Q)
Q-G - rayons of republic
subordination

Estonia (Estoniya) (R)
R-R - rayons of republic
subordination

NOTE: For some five-character calls issued before 1970, including those with the prefixes UN1 and UY5, the oblast should be determined from the list of calls [spisok pozyvnykh] (DOSAAF Publishing House, Moscow, 1973).

[end]

Стол справок

По просьбе читателей приводим краткое описание системы любительских позывных сигналов. Первая буква U или R обозначает принадлежность к СССР, вторая — союзную республику. Эти буквы указаны в скобках после названия каждой республики. Области, края, АССР, автономные области и округа (АО), а также города республиканского подчинения в РСФСР определяются по цифре и следующей за ней букве, а в остальных союзных республиках по буквам слева и справа от цифры позывного. Слова «область» в приведенном ниже списке ради краткости опущены. Жирным шрифтом выделены те области (АССР, АО), обозначения которых введены заново или изменены.

РСФСР (А, V, W, Z). 1А — г. Ленинград, 1С — Ленинградская, 1N — Карельская АССР, 1O — Архангельская, 1P — Ненецкий АО, 1Q — Вологодская, 1T — Новгородская, 1W — Псковская, 1Z — Мурманская, 2F — Калининградская, 3А — г. Москва, 3D — Московская, 3E — Орловская, 3G — Липецкая, 3I — Калининская, 3L — Смоленская, 3M — Ярославская, 3N — Костромская, 3P — Тульская, 3Q — Воронежская, 3R — Тамбовская, 3S — Рязанская, 3T — Горьковская, 3U — Ивановская, 3V — Владимирская, 3W — Курская, 3X — Калужская, 3Y — Брянская, 3Z — Белгородская, 4А — Волгоградская, 4C — Саратовская, 4F — Пензенская, 4H — Куйбышевская, 4L — Ульяновская, 4N — Кировская, 4P — Татарская АССР, 4S — Марийская АССР, 4U — Мордовская АССР, 4W — Удмуртская АССР, 4Y — Чувашская АССР, 6А — Карачаево-Черкесская АО, 6H — Ставропольский край, 6I — Калмыцкая АССР, 6J — Северо-Осетинская АССР, 6L — Ростовская, 6P — Чечено-Ингушская АССР, 6U — Астраханская, 6W — Дагестанская АССР, 6X — Кабардино-Балкарская АССР, 6Y — Адыгейская АО, 8T — Усть-Ордынский Бурятский АО, 8V — Агинский Бурятский АО, 9А — Челябинская, 9C — Свердловская, 9F — Пермская, 9G — Коми-Пермяцкий АО, 9H — Томская, 9J — Ханты-Мансийский АО, 9K — Ямало-Ненецкий АО, 9L — Тюменская, 9M — Омская, 9O — Новоси-

бирская, 9Q — Курганская, 9S — Оренбургская, 9U — Кемеровская, 9W — Башкирская АССР, 9X — Коми АССР, 9Y — Алтайский край, 9Z — Горно-Алтайская АО, 0А — Красноярский край, 0B — Таймырский АО, 0C — Хабаровский край, 0D — Еврейская АО, 0F — Сахалинская, 0H — Эвенкийский АО, 0I — Магаданская, 0J — Амурская, 0K — Чукотский АО, 0L — Приморский край, 0O — Бурятская АССР, 0Q — Якутская АССР, 0S — Иркутская, 0U — Читинская, 0W — Хакасская АО, 0X — Корякский АО, 0Y — Тувинская АССР, 0Z — Камчатская.

Украина (В, Т). В-А — Сумская, В-В — Тернопольская, В-С — Черкасская, В-D — Закарпатская, В-E — Днепропетровская, В-F — Одесская, В-G — Херсонская, В-H — Полтавская, В-I — Донецкая, В-J — Крымская, В-K — Ровенская, В-L — Харьковская, В-M — Ворошиловградская, В-N — Винницкая, В-P — Волинская, В-Q — Запорожская, В-R — Черниговская, В-S — Ивано-Франковская, В-T — Хмельницкая, В-U — Киевская, В-V — Кировоградская, В-W — Львовская, В-X — Житомирская, В-Y — Черновицкая, В-Z — Николаевская, Т-J — г. Севастополь, Т-U — г. Киев.

Белоруссия (С). С-А — г. Минск, С-С — Минская, С-I — Гродненская, С-L — Брестская, С-O — Гомельская, С-S — Могилевская, С-W — Витебская.

Азербайджан (D). D-D — районы республиканского подчинения (р.р.п.), D-K — Нагорно-Карабахская АО, D-N — Нахичеванская АССР.

Грузия (F). F-F р.р.п., F-O — Юго-Осетинская АО, F-Q — Аджарская АССР, F-V — Абхазская АССР.

Армения (G). G-G — р.р.п. **Туркмения (H).** H-A — г. Ашхабад, H-B — Красноводская, H-E — Марыйская, H-N — Ашхабадская, H-W — Ташаузская, H-Y — Чарджоуская.

Узбекистан (I). I-A — г. Ташкент, I-B Ташкентская, I-C — Кашкадарьинская, I-D — Сырдарьинская, I-F — Андижанская, I-G — Ферганская, I-I — Самаркандская, I-L — Бухарская, I-O — Наманганская, I-Q — Навоийская, I-T — Сурхандарьинская, I-U — Хорезмская, I-V — Джизакская, I-Z — Каракалпакская АССР.

ные для расчета сеансов связи через радиолуны ИСО серии «Радио» на 7, 14, 21 и 28 июля. Для каждого из дней приводятся номер первой на данные сутки орбиты, время (всемирное) и долгота восходящего узла. «Радио-5»: 11233-1.10-170 11317-0.33-172, 11402-1.55-203, 11486-1.17-204. «Радио-6»: 11312-0.37-170 11397-0.47-184, 11482-0.58-197, 11567-1.09-211. «Радио-7»: 11267-1.32-179 11351-0.24-173, 11436-1.16-197, 11520-0.08-191. «Радио-8»: 11213-0.28-157 11297-0.08-164, 11382-1.48-199, 11466-1.28-205.

Стол справок

М-N — Ошская, М-P — Нарынская, М-Q — Иссык-Кульская, М-T — Таласская. Молдавия (O). O-O — р.р.п. Латвия (P). P-P — р.р.п. Литвия (Q). Q-Q — р.р.п. Эстония (R). R-R — р.р.п. Примечание. Для секторов пятизначных позывных, введенных до 1970 года, в том числе с префиксами UN1, в UV5, область следует определять по списку позывных (Изд. ДОСААФ, М., 1973).

грацкая, L-C — Северо-Казахстанская, L-D — Семипалатинская, L-E — Кокчетавская, L-F — Павлодарская, L-G — г. Ала-Ата, L-I — Актюбинская, L-J — Восточно-Казахстанская, L-K — Кызылординская, L-L — Кустанайская, L-M — Уральская, L-N — Чимкентская, L-O — Гурьевская, L-P — Карагандинская, L-Q — Ала-Атинская, L-R — Джезказганская, L-T — Джамбулская, L-V — Талды-Курганская, L-Y — Тургайская.

Киргизия (M). M-M — р.р.п., L-B — Целино-

В предыдущем выпуске клуба «Эфир» (газета «Советский патриот» за 6 июня) была опубликована первая часть распределения позывных любительских радиостанций СССР, которое было введено в действие 1 мая с. г. В этом «Стол справок» дается вторая, завершающая часть этого материала.

Таджикистан (J). J-J — р.р.п. J-K — Кулябская, J-R — Горно-Бадхашанская АО, J-S — Ленинбадская, J-X — Курган-Тюбинская.

Казахстан (L). L-A — Маңгышлакская, L-B — Целино-

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Geographical Units in the USSR

The summary translations of Soviet articles on amateur radio frequently contain what may initially be bewildering references to krays, oblasts, rayons, RSFSR, SSRs, ASSRs, etc. A basic understanding of the geographical breakdown of the USSR is useful since the two organizations regularly mentioned in connection with the amateur service -- DOSAAF and radio sport federations -- are organized on the basis of the larger geographical units. The geographical units used in the USSR are unique and do not match up with ones used in other countries; to avoid ambiguity in cases where straightforward English translations do not exist and where a single English term might be used to translate different Russian terms -- e.g. "region" for both oblast' and rayon -- the Russian term -- with anglicized plural -- has been preserved.

In Soviet usage, "nationality" refers to ethnic origin, not country of allegiance. The union republics themselves constitute the top level of nationality-based units, being based on the dominant ethnic group residing within their borders. Each SSR has its own language, flag, Council of Ministers; indeed the Soviet Constitution guarantees the union republics the formal right of withdrawal from the Union.

Constitutionally, the USSR is just what the letters stand for -- a "Union" of "Soviet Socialist Republics." The highest level, that of the country as a whole, is indicated by terms such as "all-union," "of the USSR," or "of the Soviet Union."

The 15 soviet socialist republics are what are normally thought of as the constituent parts of the USSR -- Russia itself (the RSFSR), the Ukraine, Belorussia (White Russia), Georgia, Uzbekistan, etc. They are termed union republics to differentiate them from autonomous SSRs (see below). Any given location in the USSR lies within one union republic or another. The Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic -- the RSFSR -- occupies roughly three quarters of the land mass of the USSR; as its title suggests, the RSFSR has a federated substructure and indeed is sometimes referred to as the "Russian Federation."

The union republics are divided into variously named units, the most common being the oblast' and the next-most-common the kray. Krays are usually more extensive in area and sparser in population than oblasts. Some of the smaller union republics lack the oblast'/kray level entirely and break down directly into rayons (see below).

If a portion of a union republic is inhabited principally by a distinct ethnic group, it may be designated an autonomous soviet socialist republic -- an ASSR -- instead of an oblast' or kray; ASSRs have a more complex governmental structure -- council of ministers, language, etc. -- than do oblasts or krays. Lower down on the "nationality" scale are autonomous oblasts and autonomous okrugs (okrug = district), the former subordinate to a union republic and the latter to an oblast' or kray. The Soviet amateur press occasionally reports DXpeditions to remote "nationality"-based units.

Rayons, literally "regions" (but "region" is sometimes used to translate oblast'), are, along with the union republics, the most pervasive units in the country. A comparable unit in Canada, the UK, or the USA would be the county. Large cities such as Moscow have rayons within their borders, a reversal of the normal hierarchal relationship.

At the local level there are cities and towns (the Russian word gorod meaning both), villages (selo, or in the Caucasus aul), settlements, and "rural populated points."

